

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 06040 160017Z

63

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 6040

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MPOL YO

SUBJ: YUGOSLAV ADMIRAL DISCUSSES NAVAL DEFENSE

REF: USDAO BELGRADE 0515 DTG 141146Z (NOTAL)

1. ADMIRAL BRANKO MAMULA, COMMANDER OF THE YUGOSLAV NAVY, GIVES A RARE BUT UNREMARKABLE VIEW OF YUGOSLAV MILITARY THOUGHT IN AN ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR YUGOSLAV NAVY DAY. WRITING IN THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS' WEEKLY "KOMUNIST," HE DESCRIBES THE IMPORTANCE OF NAVAL DEFENSE, LIKELY THREATS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE, STRESSING THROUGHOUT HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE ADEQUACY OF YUGOSLAV NAVAL FORCES.

2. HE BEGINS BY NOTING THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE "STRONG INTEREST...OF BOTH MILITARY
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PAGE 02 BELGRA 06040 160017Z

BLOCS" IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION. THE SEA IS OF PARTICULAR

IMPORTANCE BECAUSE IT CARRIES ALMOST 50 PERCENT OF YUGOSLAV TRADE AND LINKS YUGOSLAVIA WITH NONALIGNED FRIENDS IN AFRICA AND ASIA. MAMULA ALSO COMMENTS THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN INFLUENCED THE COURSE OF BOTH WORLD WARS IN YUGOSLAVIA.

3. HIS PRIMARY FOCUS, HOWEVER, IS THE ADRIATIC. HE DISCUSSES TWO NAVAL THREATS: A SURPRISE ASSAULT INVOLVING AVIATION AND MARINES AND THE USE OF SMALL "SPECAIL WARFARE UNITS" SUPPORTED FROM THE SEA. SUCH SPECIAL UNITS RANGE FROM GROUPS OF POLITICAL EMIGRANTS TO AIR BORNE FORCES. IN HIS ONLY SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO A FOREIGN NAVY, MAMULA WRITES WITH REGARD TO SPECIAL WARFARE: "THE VIETNAM WAR HAS SHOWN THE ABILITY OF THE AMERICAN NAVY TO CARRY OUT AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS OF THAT KIND ON LONG COASTAL ZONES AND RIVERS."

4. IN DEFENDING THE ADRIATIC, MAMULA SEES THE NAVY AS "THE BACKBONE OF ALL PEOPLE'S DEFENSE". IN WARTIME IT WOULD BE ASSISTED BY THE MERCHANT FLEET, COMMERCIAL MARITIME SERVICES, SPORTS FISHERMEN AND OTHERS. HE JUDGES THAT NAVAL FORCES ARE CAPABLE OF HANDLING FRONTAL ATTACKS, DIVERSIONARY FORCES INFILTRATED INTO THE REAE OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH.

5. COMMENT: MAMULA TOLD ARMY ATTACHE AT A RECEPTION THAT HE MENTIONED THE AMERICAN NAVY BECAUSE OF ITS CLEAR EXPERTISE AS DEMONSTRATED IN VIETNAM, NOT BECAUSE HE BELIEVES IT POSES PARTICULAR THREAT TO YUGOSLAVIA. AT A MINIMUM, HOWEVER, HIS REFERENCE TO THE AMERICAN NAVY IN THE CONTEXT OF POTENTIAL THREATS SUGGESTS THAT YUGOSLAVS PERCEIVES NAVAL THREAT FROM U.S. AS WELL AS USSR, WHICH MAMULA NOWHERE MENTIONS.
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